



## NEWS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

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### **Law enforcement officers, agencies honored for impaired driving enforcement**

*Ceremony salutes efforts to keep Kentucky roads safe*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 5, 2012) – The Kentucky Office of Highway Safety (KOHS) today honored 197 law enforcement officers from 164 agencies across the Commonwealth for their efforts to target impaired drivers.

The 2012 Governor's Impaired Driving Enforcement Awards ceremony was held at the Galt House Hotel and Suites in Louisville. Awards were presented to officers with the most impaired driving arrests in each agency and division.

"Impaired driving is not an accident — it's an epidemic of careless disregard for human life," said KOHS Director Bill Bell, who presented the awards at the ceremony. "These officers, their departments and agencies render a great service for public safety by removing drunken and drugged drivers from our roads."

Last year, Kentucky recorded more than 5,600 crashes related to drugs and alcohol, resulting in 150 deaths and more than 3,000 injuries.

"Public safety improves exponentially every time an impaired driver is removed from the roadway," said Kentucky State Police Commissioner Rodney Brewer. "Were it not for the actions of these men and women, there would undoubtedly be more crashes, injuries or worse on our roadways."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 1 in 3 Americans will be impacted by a drunken driving crash in his or her lifetime.

"Research shows high-visibility enforcement reduces impaired-driving fatalities by as much as 20 percent," said NHTSA Region III Law Enforcement Liaison Bill Tower. "While many people are getting the message, there are still too many who just don't understand that alcohol and driving are a fatal combination."

Matt Jones with Kentucky Sports Radio recorded a public service announcement encouraging the use of designated drivers that airs during his daily radio show. Jones took the opportunity to praise the officers for their commitment to keeping Kentucky roads safe.

“Hard-working, high-profile coaches and athletes receive public recognition and accolades for their jobs,” said Jones. “You are here today because of your hard work and dedication to your job of saving lives, and we value your efforts.”

The officers on hand to be honored were to have included Marion County Sheriff’s Deputy Anthony Rakes, who tied for highest number of impaired driving arrests within his agency. But Rakes died from gunshot wounds sustained during a Nov. 14 traffic stop. After a moment of silence, Rakes’ award was accepted by Sheriff Jimmy Clements.

To raise awareness of the dangers of impaired driving and to alert the public of an increased enforcement presence over the holidays, the annual “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” campaign will begin Dec. 14, 2012, and run through Jan. 1, 2013. This campaign is sponsored by NHTSA and the KOHS.

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**NOTE TO EDITORS:** Attached spreadsheets identify individual and division award recipients. Photos of recipients will be posted on [http://transportation.ky.gov/Highway-Safety/Pages/dui\\_awards.aspx](http://transportation.ky.gov/Highway-Safety/Pages/dui_awards.aspx) by 4 p.m. EST Friday, Dec. 7.